

*The Copy of a Narrative prepared for
his Majesty about the Year 1674. to
distinguish Protestants from Papists.*

THat as the business of the Christian Religion is now a thing not capable to be separated from an Affair of State ; so considered, as such, it is far more difficult for a Prince to manage and regulate, than any other Affair of State whatever ; and more difficult for a Protestant Prince to govern it, than for any other Prince, and the Reasons are as followeth.

First, A Prince having the Character or Repute only of a Secular Authority, hath not that immediate influence either upon Religion it self, or upon Religious People, which the Clergy hath ; for as it is not to be expected that a Prince should have that knowledge, so neither is it possible that he should be any way so conversant in, or so attendant upon the Affairs, Controversies, and Disputes which do relate to Religion, as the Clergy themselves may, and are : And by reason of this, though the Prince hath in other things never so great an ability of judgment, and be never so Absolute or Supreme, yet he is denied the Right of this judgment, as to the matters of Religion, in regard that this is appropriated (if it be not usurped) solely to the Clergy.

Further, That the Clergy taking upon them the sole right of Judgment in all Religious and Ecclesiastical Affairs, do by this means presume their Judgment alone is to be received by the Prince, whensoever they see it reasonable to desire his Authority to confirm and assent to such things in Religion as they would have confirmed and assented unto, and whensoever they on the contrary shall desire his nulling and repressing such things as they properly dislike, and would have null'd and repressed by him ; seeing all such representations, when at any time made by the Clergy, are not only the easier, but the sooner gain'd by them, because of the entire trust that in the whole Affair of Religion is generally committed to them by the Prince, as to persons not only of supposed sufficiency, but of supposed Conscience and Integrity, and because there can be no third party therefore that hath at any time a power to examine the things propounded by them, or to sit into the grounds or reasons of them, they are the more easie to be gain'd also ; because of the power and influence which all pretences and arguments about Religion do commonly and rationally carry with them, with reference to the Publick Peace, and to the establishment of Piety, and to the procuring both of prosperity and of blessing upon a Nation it self ; which things being generally apprehended, and believed by all to be the real consequences of Religion, as nothing therefore can render a Prince more obnoxious than the rumour of his being wholly irreligious, so nothing doth or can render a Prince more plausible, or to speak

more properly, nothing renders a Prince more naturally grateful to the hearts, or more inwardly awful and reverend to the mind and affections of his people, than the supposition of his being Religious or Pious doth; (this being easie to be observed, not only in the Protestant Countries, but even in the Catholick Countries themselves, and indeed in all where Religion is seriously or zealously professed) and therefore all Propositions about Religion having this advantage above all others of any kind whatsoever, no marvel if they gain a more easie Reception with any Government, than any other Propositions can, and especially if offer'd by such who claim the main care and charge of all things which concern Religion, and concern the welfare of it, as well as they challenge the chiefest knowledge and judgment about it. For these several reasons therefore, and for the purchasing and conserving such a name among his people as may become a Prince that would justly be accounted Pious, and for the avoiding the blemish and imputation of the contrary, a Prince is oft-times induced, through the instant request and importunity of the Clergy, both to dispense with, and yield to such things, which otherwise if duly examin'd, would neither be judged suitable, nor perhaps consistent with his Dignity either to do, or to grant.

So that though it be a thing for all these reasons very plain, that a Prince cannot in the Affairs of Religion easily decline the judgment and representation of the Clergy; yet nothing is more certain, than that their Counsel proves frequently not only imposing, but very dangerous, both to his Government, to his Safety, to his Honour, and to his Interest, and the more, because as the rise of their advice doth often proceed (if not for the most part) from those considerations, and no other, wherein their own Interest as a Clergy is particularly, and sometimes privately concerned; so the end of their advice terminates generally in nothing else beyond this, that due care and just consideration, which is but fit to be had to the Princes Interest, being (as it is evident by experience) either not so faithfully and uprightly, or at least not so circumspectly minded by them as they ought: For the proof of which, we may appeal even to matter of Fact, there being not one or two, but rather too many Presidents, wherein the advice which the Clergy hath given to Princes hath been so precipitate and rash, that Princes to avoid those mischiefs that have followed from their Counsels (and doubting lest other and further inconveniences might ensue upon them that might be worse) have been forced oft-times to rescind their own Orders, though to the lessening of the Credit and Authority of their Government: Yea, not only so, but through the importunity of the Clergy, and through the rashness and unseasonableness of their Counsels, it is not one Prince, but several Princes that have been frequently intangled, either with Divisions and Dissentions at home among their own Subjects, or with Quarrels abroad among their Neighbours, not only to the disquiet of their Government, to the ruine of many Ancient Families, to the shedding of much Innocent Blood, and to the waste and consumption of an extream mass of Treasure; but which is yet worse, to the doing of all this without any fruit, and to the giving over at length the very Quarrel it self, even for these reasons, viz. because they saw they were misled in it, and were able to effect none of those ends which others propounded to them by it, and which they propounded to themselves, than which nothing can render a Prince more unfortunate to the eye of himself, or

of others; which unfortunateness by their ingaging in Quarrels relating to Religion, hath nevertheless happened not to Princes of ordinary, but to Princes of extraordinary Wisdom, Courage and Conduct; witness the ill success of *Charles the Fifth* in his War upon the Princes of *Germany*, and of his Son *Philip the Second of Spain*, in his attempts upon the *Netherlands*, and of three Kings of *France* one after another; and witness, what is not fit to be particularized, even those things that happened at home in our own Country, which have drawn a Mourning Veil upon the Record of our own Times.

And yet so untractable is the power, authority, and resolution of the Clergy, that if a Prince shall refuse their advice, though out of judgment, or shall oppose, though never so justly, the unreasonableness of their Counsels, they do hereupon not only meet and held among themselves, but partly by preaching, partly by writing, and partly by other ways of negotiating, they do endeavour to gain to themselves both the greatest persons, and greatest part of the Nation, even to prevent the effects of his judgment, prudence and moderation.

And these are the reasons, in the first place, that though Religion cannot be consider'd at present otherwise than as a affair of State, yet so considered, it is the most difficult affair of any for a Prince rightly to govern; which reasons if they have any thing of weight or truth at all in them, they will evidence these deductions following to be as true, and as certain, *viz.*

1. That the affair of Religion is of too active a nature to lye wholly neglected and unregarded by any Government.

2. That none can have a principal hand in the Government of it, but they must have the principal power and opportunity through it to affect the people more than any other, either in the point of Obligation, or in the point of neglect and disrespect.

3. That this must be much more true and certain in such a Nation, where the peoples zeal and affections do run most strongly of any to Religion (as in this Nation) then it is or can be true in any other Nation whatever.

4. That whoever will weigh it, will find the Clergy therefore singly for this reason (even because of their meer calling and relation to Religion) to be considerable in every Nation, both for power and interest.

5. That though they dare not, meerly because of their calling, any way challenge an order or superiority above the Prince, nor can, yet they are by consequence always made independent upon the Prince, and sometimes absolute over the Prince, when the Prince himself shall entirely, and without any check, commit the affairs of the whole Church and Religion to them, because if they govern Religion well and entirely, according to the peoples satisfaction, they most unavoidably draw and ingage the very souls, hearts, and consciences of the people to them, and that by the firmest, strongest, and most lasting tie of any, which is that of their minds and affections, and of the duty that they owe unto God: if on the contrary, they rule the affairs of Religion wholly and perfectly to the disgust, oppression, or bondage of the people, they must of necessity as much disgust the Government, though not for it self, yet because of that absolute Authority which it maintains and upholds in the Clergy.

6. That the committing the affairs of Religion and of the Church entirely to the Clergy, without any check at all upon them, is yet the more against the interest of the Prince, because it layeth an express temptation upon them to

govern both the Church and Religion absolutely, and at their own will, and consequently to govern Religion with much less care, heed, circumspection and moderation, than otherwise they would have done.

7. While the Clergy govern the affairs of the Church, and of Religion absolutely, and by their own will, without any check whatever upon them, the Prince himself neither hath, nor can have any the least security, that they will not govern all things directly agreeable to their own Interest, and to their private and particular concern; let that interest, with the means best to effect it, be never so distinct to the interest of the Prince, or to the interest of the people, or never so destructive or contrary to either.

8. That it is less adviseable for a Protestant Prince to commit the affairs of the Church and of Religion absolutely and entirely to the Clergy, than it is for any other Prince, because the Clergy are by this without any Head at all over them, and without any counsel whatever that is superiour to them (which they are not under the Papist themselves) and because the Prince must by this means inevitably subject himself to their advice, and to the effect of it, let the issue of it prove never so inconvenient or rash to him, as is manifest from the examples before mentioned.

9. The less adviseable also for a Protestant Prince than for any other Prince, because it is not only against the examples of *Hollin*, but against the examples of all the Protestant Princes that were instrumental in the first Reformation, and of most of their Successors.

10. That as it must be utterly against the Interest of the Prince to take part with the Clergy, when ruling of Religion wholly and perfectly to the disgust of the people, so it must recommend him not only to the judgments, but to the minds, hearts, and affections of the people (even beyond what any thing else hath a power to do) if he shall please more especially at such a time as that is, to gratifie them with the sense of his own care of them; and consequently, that there cannot well be a greater season or opportunity put into the hand of any Prince, either to honour himself, or to oblige a people, and to oblige them to him in strictness, by all ties that are possible to be laid in gratitude or conscience upon them, than for a Prince to take the affairs of Religion or of the Church into his own hand, at such a time as they have most miscarried in the Government and management of the Clergy.

And how much they have miscarried, and are very probable to miscarry under the Government of the Clergy, may yet further appear, if it be considered, that it is impossible there should be any such thing as good Government even about any affair, where there is not a Wisdom proportionable, (*viz.*) where there is not a sufficient knowledge or skill in the particular nature of the thing that is to be governed, and in the difficulties that are incident to it, and in those several ways, methods or means, that may best and most prudently obviate the said difficulties; for if there wants a sight fully of any of these things, how is it possible that confusion, and all manner of miscarriage and distraction, should any way rightfully or effectually be avoided.

But whether the Ruling Clergy of this Nation (for I mean no other in all my Discourse when I speak of the Clergy) have exercised such a Wisdom, or manifested such a Knowledge in the affairs of the Protestant Religion, as is indeed but requisite to the very nature of the said affairs, and to the several difficulties

difficulties that do attend them, may be discerned when I have laid down the reasons for what I asserted in the second place, *viz.* that the affairs of Religion, as things stand at present, are far more difficult to be governed by a Protestant Prince than by any other; and consequently it may be further seen, whether it be any way adviseable for his Majesty, or any way advantageous to his affairs, still to commit the whole trust of the Church, and of Religion it self, entirely into the hands or Government of the Clergy.

To the end therefore that I may with all clearness represent the difficulties that do attend the Protestant Religion, with the Government of it (as things now stand) I shall humbly crave leave to lay down this as the Foundation of my whole Argument, which I humbly conceive will hardly be denied me by any: *Viz*

That in the Protestant Church, the Prince professing himself to be of the Reformed Religion, cannot any way remove or take away the use of the Scriptures from the common people, the use or restoration of them in the Vulgar Tongue being accounted one main part, if not the chiefest privilege of any that came by the Reformation it self.

Which being granted me, another difficulty is created by it inevitably, for seeing the Prince is no way able to remove the use of the Scriptures from the common people, he can never possibly be able to remove the influence and effects which the Divine Authority of the Scriptures must have (and cannot but have) upon the minds and consciences of the said people, as the Scriptures are acknowledged to be the only Word, the alone Rule of the mind of God unto his people; this Character or apprehension of the Dignity and Authority of the Scriptures being so essential to our Reformation it self, that there is no Protestant can so much as doubt of it, it being that which is not only commonly taught in our pulpits, but frequently inculcated to us while we are Children by our Parents, and by those Masters which take the care of us while we are at School.

And therefore this Principle of the Divine Authority of the Scriptures being from our very Education thus firmly rooted in us, it must unavoidably make the influence and effects to be equally as strong, and equally as powerful upon the Consciences of us, even as they themselves are that is equal with the very Authority of God himself (and especially upon all such as are religiously educated and bred;) so that there is no obligation or tie whatever, which is capable to be laid on men upon any civil, outward, or temporal account, that is able to have any part of that strength or influence upon them, as the Scriptures must necessarily have upon, and over the generality of all persons in the Protestant Church, which is another consequence that cannot be removed by the Civil Government.

The strength and prevalence of which tie, as made upon the Consciences of all persons, as Protestants, by or from the Scriptures, is yet the more considerable, because whatever Worship, Service, or Religion, we as Protestants do profess to give unto God, we profess it only from the Authority of the Scriptures themselves, and from the Authority of them as they are thus owned and accounted by the Protestant Church to be our Supreme, and consequently our immediate tie in all that we believe, and in all that we act as Protestants towards God, hath not its termination or its dependance so much upon men, or upon the Church, as upon the Scripture or Word of God it self;

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we judging it lawful enough to forsake the Church, when we once judge the Church in what it believes, or in what it acts or practiseth toward God, to have forsaken the Word; and our Profession or Religion being thus founded, I mean out of conscience purely to Gods Word, every man then properly as a Protestant (if he be sincere) doth as much believe that the worship (whatever it be which he professeth) is as truly agreeable to the Mind and Will of God, as is the very Scripture it self; and consequently, that he is as much to contend for the said Worship, as he is bound to contend for the Authority of the Scripture it self; for these two being taken by him but for one thing (*viz.* the Authority of the Scripture, and the truth and authority of what he professeth) consequently the same tie that binds him to the Scripture, must of necessity bind him to that Religion, whatever it be, which he as a Protestant professeth unto God; and consequently, if there be no tie so firm or so strong upon the Conscience, as that of the Divine and absolute Authority of the Scripture is (as we have proved there is not) there can be no tie stronger than what Protestants as such (and as sincere) must necessarily have for that Religion, whatever it be, that they do respectively profess unto God.

And this now being made clear and undoubted, *viz.* that the tie and obligation that every man hath to the worship which he professeth unto God (properly as a Protestant) lieth in, and riseth immediately from the Scriptures; and it being likewise cleared, that the highest tie which can possibly be laid upon the Conscience of any man, is that proceeding from the Scriptures, as they are the only Rule of Gods mind and will to us; it must necessarily follow, that if a Prince can neither remove the use of the Scriptures themselves, nor remove the obligation which they have above all things upon the Consciences of men (even from their very Education) as they are the only Word of God, he can never possibly remove the obedience which men will always conceive themselves obliged to give to the said Word, in whatsoever it be they apprehend it doth clearly command, seeing this obedience is looked upon to be the same, and no other with an obedience given to God himself; and if an obedience given unto God be in conscience also infinitely preferable to any obedience to man, then must an obligation to the Law and Will of God be always preferable to, and stronger than any obligation whatever to the Law or command of men, which is a third thing that can no way possibly be avoided.

And consequently, if the Law of the Church cannot in the matter of Worship any way compel or bind men to obedience further or otherwise than as they apprehend it to be agreeable to the Law of God, or to the Law of his Word, then neither can the Law of the Prince, or the Law of the Civil Government, bind mens Consciences in the matter of worship, further or otherwise than the Law of the Church, *viz.* no otherwise than as the said Law appears to them to be agreeable to Gods Law (which is the Law of his Scriptures or Word) and consequently it can never be avoided by any Prince as a Protestant, but his Authority, as relating purely to things civil, with the efficacy of it, must stand upon one Rule; his Authority, as relating to things of Divine Worship, with the efficacy of it, must necessarily and unavoidably stand upon another Rule; and therefore that his Authority over his Subjects in the one and in the other of these must of necessity be distinguished, which is the fourth thing that we say cannot in any Protestant Government possibly be prevented.

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For if no Law can possibly eradicate the notion that there is a God, no endeavour of man whatever can hinder then his being worshipped, by such at least as have a sense of his being, and do verily believe that he is.

Wherefore if we are trained up from our Childhood, and train'd up not only as men, but as Protestants, firmly to believe that God will accept of no worship at all from us, but what is agreeable to his Word; and if it be a thing continually inculcated to us, even from our very Infancy, that it is in a conformity to this Word alone that all Religion whatever doth consist then it is not reason only, but experience it self which attests it, that a man may as soon quit his notion that there is a God, or to be afraid to own it; and may as soon quit that notion that God is to be worshipped, or be afraid to own it, as he may quit or be afraid to own as a Protestant this notion, (*viz.*) that God is so only to be worshipped, and no otherwise, then as he hath set down in his Word.

And if this notion then about his Word as the only rule of the worship of God be as firmly planted in us by our Education, as any notion can be planted in us that belongs to our nature as men, it must needs follow, that a Government may as well, and with as good success, hope or propound to it self by a Law to extinguish common notions, as hope or propound to it self by a Law to extinguish among Protestants the notion of the necessity of worshipping God according to his Word.

And therefore if it be rightly considered, it will likewise appear, that it must be to him that is truly educated as a Protestant, every way as grievous, to be commanded by a Law to forsake Christianity it self, as to be commanded by a Law to forsake that worship, which he as a Protestant, cannot but believe in his heart is alone agreeable to the Mind and Law of God, which is that worship that is given to God directly conformable to his Scripture or Word; and of the truth of this, the Martyrs in Queen *Mary's* time are a competent witness.

And consequently, they that pretend to take another measure of Protestantism than according to what is thus firmly rooted in the hearts of men, both by their Education, and by the very Principles and Doctrine of the Reformation, do seem but to prevaricate only with the Reformed Religion, and with the sixth Article of the Church of *England*, and do, if not in words, yet in actions seem manifestly to declare, that they neither really believe the Scriptures, or the Christian Religion, or the Reformation to be of God; for if the whole of the Christian Religion be contained in the Scripture, and in the Scripture alone, as the sixth Article of the Church of *England* doth both plainly and expressly confess it is, then to make the Rule of the Word to be our Rule wholly as Christians in the worship of God, is so far from an obstinacy in us, and so far from any thing of humour, or superstition, or conceit, that the contrary can be no way dispensible, and much less maintainable before God; and therefore there is neither any part of Popery it self, nor any thing of Idolatry, though never so gross, but it may be as easily imposed upon, and as easily entertained by a Protestant, as any worship may; which he evidently seeth (or is sufficiently perswaded of in his Conscience) to be against the mind of God, or against the rule of his Word, seeing it is this rule that is the only Index of his mind as to us, and it is this rule alone to which all promises of God are entirely made; and all the promises of God being

ing made to this rule only, this rule, and no other, must then, as we are Christians, be the alone Foundation both of all our hope, and of all our trust toward God, and must consequently be the only ground upon which we can as Christians have any expectation of salvation and life, and consequently the whole interest and concern of our Souls (at least as we are Protestants) doth and must stand entirely upon the said Word.

Which deductions, if they cannot any way possibly be denied, the disobeying then of all such Laws in the matter of worship, as are not agreeable to the Word of God (or which at least appear not to be so) is a thing, wholly inevitable, and is impossible to be avoided in a Protestant Government, even as we are rational persons, because there is a threefold reason that necessarily impells it: First, as it hath its rise from that most forcible and indelible Character which is writ in the minds of all men, *viz.* that seeing God is, he ought to be worshipped in some manner or another of necessity. Secondly, as it hath its rise from that Character which hath equal force with the other in the minds of us as we are bred Protestants, *viz.* that God is no other way to be worshipped, nor will accept of any worship from us (as Christians) but what is agreeable to his Word; which two Principles, seeing (by reason of our Education) they make but one indeed in our hearts, as we are Protestants, they do and must constrain us as soon to abandon all worship it self unto God, as to abandon that worship which is properly agreeable to his Word, because so far as we abandon this, we do abandon all worship that is (according to our Principles as Protestants) either acceptable with God, or agreeable to the Mind of God: wherefore if to these two we shall add the third ground of its rise (which is as certain also as either of the other) *viz.* that we neither have hope in God, nor any promise made us by God, further than as we obey him in his Word, or further than as we worship him according to the rule of it: I say, these three things being now jointly considered, and seriously weighed by us, what man is there (or what man can there be) who firmly believes there is any such thing as Salvation and Life, who will not run any hazard rather than forbear what he judgeth to be the worship of God, or rather than he will observe such a worship unto God as he cannot but know, or cannot (at least) but verily believe to be contrary to his mind, and contrary to the rule of his Word.

If it be evil then for any man to believe that God is indispensibly to be worshipped after some manner or another, or evil for a man to believe that there is no other rule of his will or mind to us, as we are Christians, but his word, and therefore no other rule wherein his worship is contained, besides his said word; or if it be evil to expect that God will most truly, faithfully, and fully perform his promises to us, if we shall serve him according to his word, and not otherwise; I say, if any of these three things be evil, then it must be evil to disobey any Law relating to the worship of God, though it be not agreeable to his word: but if no one of these things be evil in themselves, they can never make any man evil who simply conforms to them; I say, not simply for his conformity, how strictly or entirely soever it be.

And therefore if these three Principles are of such a nature as create a necessity of our compliance with them, even as we are rational persons, we must either then remove the Principles themselves, and the lawfulness of them, or we must unavoidably suffer and permit their efficacy, as lawful

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over men; for to allow the Principles themselves as good, and lawful, and as necessary and indispensable in themselves, and to disallow nevertheless the practice of them, or to disallow such persons as follow them, and imbrace them; and to account such persons to be only disturbers, or to be men so evil and bad, as that they are not fit to be tolerated in a Nation, even though no Crime besides this be objected against them, is either grossly to prevaricate with the said Principles themselves, and to make but a mock of them, or it is to do that which is absolutely repugnant, absurd, and contradictory in it self, which is wholly against the reason and nature of a man as a man.

For though it cannot be maintained, that all the Laws of men must or ought necessarily to arise out of the Laws of God, viz. either that of his word, or that Law written in the heart of man; yet it is maintained among all Christian Governments whatever, that no Law of the Civil Magistrate hath any power to supersede any Law of God, whether it be that writ in the heart of man, or that writ in his word; and therefore it is universally agreed by all Governments, that all humane Laws, if they be inconsistent either with any of these common Principles that are writ in our Nature (which are called the common Principles of Reason) or with any that is expressly writ in the word of God, they are null and void in themselves, because they are against a prior or preceding obligation, which all men as men have by nature unto God, as unto their Supreme Lord and Creator.

Wherefore in as much as it is clear, that all Laws which command men to forbear that worship, which they as Protestants do in their hearts judge and believe to be agreeable to the mind, will, and word of God, or which command them to conform to such a worship as they judge, according to their understanding, and cannot but believe to be disagreeable to the said mind, will, and word of God, are of this nature, and are such Laws as have a manifest inconsistency, either with the Law writ in the heart it self, viz. which is, that God is indispensibly to be worshipped in some manner or another, or have an inconsistency with the Law writ in the word of God, viz. that he will reward all such as shall obey him, according to the rule which he hath given them in the said word, and will punish such as shall do the contrary; or that they have an inconsistency with the rule of the Reformation it self, which is, that all worship which is Christian, and instituted Federal, is to be given to God according to the Scripture; and that whatever is not read in the Scripture, nor may be proved by the Scripture, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an Article of Faith, which are the very words of the sixth Article of the Church of *England*, (and which Article, if wounded, the rest of the 39 Articles must be wounded with it, seeing they are founded mainly upon it) I with all humbleness say, that seeing all Laws (in any Protestant Government whatever) which restrain such a worship as is agreeable to the word of God (or is really believed to be such by them that practise it) have a manifest repugnancy or inconsistency in them, either to the Law writ in the heart of man as man, or to the express Law of Gods word, or to the Principles of our Reformation, and to the sixth Article of the Church of *England* (upon which alone the rest of our Confession is built) all the said Laws therefore as such, are entirely against that prior Law, or preceding obligation which men as men have by nature indispensibly unto God as their immediate Creator and Lord, above any which they have or can have unto man.

man, how lawfully soever he may be the superiour of them; and consequently, that all non-obedience or non-conformity to any of the said Laws, though it be in a sense voluntary, yet it is neither elective, nor indeed truly and properly free; and therefore is not the least breach of affection, nor any real forfeiture of a mans duty to his Prince, or to the Government, because it is a non-conformity or disobedience that is absolutely constrained, compelled, and of an inevitable and indispensible nature in it self, by reason of the prior Law, or of the preceding and indispensible obligation which we have both as men, and as Christians unto God, and have above and beyond any obligation that we have or can have possibly to any person, as the Prince or Superiour of us; and all men that maintain the contrary, and that either out of a luxury of wit, or out of a superfluousness of vanity, insulency, or pride, do seek to baffle this argument, or to evade the force of it, under the pretence of the capriciousness, humoursomness, and a sectation of singularity that may be in some persons, may with as good reason, and with as solid a judgment, make a meer mock or ridicule of all the Martyrs that have been since the World stood; and may as well call *Daniel*, and the three Children, and all the Primitive Christians and Apostles who suffered for God, and for the Testimony of his Word, and of Christ (*Rev. l. 6. 9. Rev. l. 1. 9.*) men that were only capricious, humorous, and persons that did affect a singularity, as call all men so at this day, who ever they are that do not conform to the Laws Nationally made about Worship and Religion; for if their bare Allegation, that all men who do not conform, are men only of humorous and capricious tempers, and men who meerly affect a singularity and disturbance, shall be taken for sufficient Evidence against them: By as just a Law the Testimony of any Atheist may as well be taken against all the Martyrs that ever were, and the testimony of any common person may as well be taken against them themselves that alledge this, that they are Atheists: for if this last be not reasonable, neither is the first; for if anothers bare Allegation is not to be taken against them, nor ought to be allowed as an Evidence, so neither is their bare saying to be taken against others.

By all that I have said then, if allowed, it will appear, that there is a clear difference between the Authority of a Prince in things Civil, and in things relating to Worship and Religion: for as his Authority about things Civil is unquestionable, and entersares with no Law of God whatever, and can have no pretence therefore to intrench upon the Conscience, or upon any prior obligation or duty that a man oweth unto God; and as it must for all these reasons be necessarily and indispensibly obeyed and submitted unto by all his Subjects, so on the contrary, a Prince, especially as a Protestant, can put out no Law about Divine Worship, but his Subjects, so far as they are Protestants, are bound in Conscience, and by the very Principles of that Religion which they profess, not only to consider it, but to examine it, whether it be agreeable to the Word of God, or not: and if it appear not to be such (at least according to the best of their understandings) as they will have a Plea always not to submit to it, by reason it intrencheth upon a prior obligation that they have, both in Conscience, and according to the Principles of their Reformation unto God (and according also to the sixth Article of the Church of *England* it self) so this Plea cannot well with Justice be denied them, if no Crime whatever in their Conversation can be proved against them:

them : nor can men in this case be actually punished and proceeded again^d, without the sense and grief of that wrong or oppression that is manifestly done to them, and suffered by them, especially seeing their non-conformity to the said Laws proceeds not, as we said, either from their Election or Liberty, nor yet from any breach of duty or affection to their Prince, but only from what appears to them to be an inevitable or indispensable necessity that ariseth, and is occasioned from their meer Profession, as they are of the Protestant Religion : To which end, let me humbly beg leave to offer one argument more also, which is,

» That the thing which doth Essentially distinguish a *Protestant* from a *Papist*, more than any note, mark, or character whatsoever besides, is, that a *Papist* by his Principles, as a *Papist*, may not, and indeed cannot dispute any Law whatever, relating to the Worship or Service of God, provided it be declared and established by what he acknowledgeth to be the Church, because he takes the Authority of the Church for the whole Argument, or for the only Foundation of all his Obedience unto God, rather than the Divine Authority of the Scripture, or Word ; and because he presumeth the Church also to be a thing altogether holy, and such as neither hath erred, nor can err : for should he question this, he must question the whole of his Religion it self : whereas the *Protestant* Church, on the other hand, having separated from the Church of *Rome*, not only upon the supposition that she hath actually erred, but that she hath been grossly corrupted, as well in Manners, as in Faith ; and having for the better justification of her own Practice, both in matter of Worship, and in all things relating to Doctrine and Faith, set up the Scriptures, as the sole and Sovereign Rule of Gods mind and will to his Church ; as she cannot challenge the exercise of any Authority therefore that is beyond that of the Scriptures, or of any that is not subordinate to the Scriptures it self, so it is expected, that all the duties consequently which she requires, and all those Articles or Points of Faith which she at any time recommends to such as are the Members of her, should always be enforced from those Arguments properly and only which are drawn from the Scriptures, because it is this which she herself hath appealed unto, and this only which she challengeth to justify her.

A Protestant then that understands the grounds of Religion, or that hath been at all instructed in the rise or Principles of Reformation, taking this for the very first Article of his Faith, that a Church may err, and may have corruption in it, and may in its Worship possibly swerve and depart from the pure Mind, Word, and Wisdom of God ; and laying this no less firmly as the foundation of his belief on the other hand (*viz.*) that the Scriptures cannot err, nor can be other than unalterable and incorruptible Rule of Gods Law, and of his will and mind to his people, he cannot possibly hold the Authority of the Church to be Divine, any further, or otherwise, than as it appears to be clearly grounded upon the Scripture as the word of God, and consequently the tye or obligation which he hath to obey the Church, so far as it relates to the Conscience, and binds the Conscience, ariseth out of no other ground than from the conformity which he seeth, or is persuaded that the Church hath in her Laws, Orders, and Doctrines to the said Word ; and consequently, if this conformity doth or shall once cease in the said Church, a Protestant, as a Protestant, cannot but judge his tye or obligation to her as a Church ought to cease also with it.

And this being the true state of that Radical or Essential difference that is between the Principles of a Protestant, and the Principles of a Papist, as a Papist, if a Church then that professeth her self to be a Protestant (or the Clergy rather who are the Rulers properly of it) shall not much consider or regard the justifying of what Laws and Orders she makes, by the consonancy they expressly have to the Law or Mind of God in his Word (which is his Rule to the Church) nor shall much concern it self, to clear and enforce the Faith and Doctrine which she holds, by the evidence of its truth, or by the authority of it, as sufficiently grounded upon that word that is absolutely divine, but shall, on the contrary, in whatsoever the commands, or in the things she teacheth, constrain and exact an obedience from her Members to her self, and to her own Authority as absolute, and as unubordinate to the Word of God; and therefore to her own Authority, as it is a distinct thing from the said word, that Church (or the Clergy rather which are the Rulers of it) so far as she doth this in any Doctrine, or in any Law that she makes indispensable, doth so far cease in her Principles and practice to be Protestant, and doth so far disclaim, not only a main and chief ground of her separation from the Church of *Rome*, but the very Principle it self upon which she pretends to guide herself, and justify her self in her Reformation.

For if it cannot be denied, that this was one main and great cause of our separation from the Church of *Rome*, (*viz.*) because she had made her self and her Commands absolute, and had set up an Authority in the matters of worship and faith above that of the Scripture, as the word of God; and secondly, because she did not barely excommunicate men, but did also persecute them, and did deprive them both of their Estates, Liberties, and Lives, upon a Principle as contrary to Humane Reason, as it was contrary to Humane Society and quiet (*viz.*) not for any evil in their Conversations, in their Morals, or in their Lives, but merely for obeying what they sincerely judged to be the Law, Will, and Mind of God; and merely for believing that his whole Law, Will, and Mind to his Church, as a Church especially relating to the worship of himself, was contained in his word; and thirdly, because by this persecution, as it was extended to the extreme punishment of persons both in their Liberties and Goods, and sometimes in their Lives, by stinking Prisons, and want of Necessaries, she did necessarily draw upon her the guilt of mens Apostacy, and Hypocrisie, and Dissimulation, who durst not but obey and comply with her Commands, merely out of fear; and did as necessarily draw upon her the guilt of all that suffering, cruelty, and blood, whatever it were she spilt, or did inflict upon those persons who withstood her Commands, and who were otherwise in all things blameless, both as to their Morals, Lives, and Conversions.

I say, if it be matter of Fact, and that which cannot be denied, that these three things were some of the main and principal causes for which we separated from the Church of *Rome*, and for which our first Reformers themselves called her Antichristian, and sometimes Bloody, and sometimes Scarlet Whore; and if these three things, when at any time mentioned, with reference to the Church of *Rome*, are still acknowledged to be evil, and so stiled to this day, so far as it concerns her; yea, if these three things are at this very present in controversy with that Church, not only charged upon her, but cast in her teeth (among many other things) by way of reproach, and to set

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forth the just ground that we, even as the Church of *England* have (as well as other Churches) both of exception and hatred against her, must not these three things be much more evil in a Protestant Church, who after she condemned all these things, not only as evil, but as Antichristian in the Church of *Rome*, and after she hath pretended to separate from the said Church for them, doth nevertheless give her self leave to practise them, without condemning her self at all in them; and must not this practise cast a manifest blemish and reproach upon her own Reformation, and evidence to the World that she doth not either believe the Principles of it, or doth not at least dare to trust to it.

Wherefore if the said Church (*viz.* the Ruling Clergy) meerly upon those grounds, and only to those ends, which are both thus evil in themselves, and thus contrary to the grounds and ends of our Reformation, shall endeavour to engage the power of the Civil Magistrate to her assistance, I humbly offer it to consideration, whether in moving this to a Prince, especially as he is a Protestant, she doth or can move him to any other purpose, than that his Authority may promote the defection she hath made from her own Principles, and may countenance her in that which she knoweth, that the rules of Reformation and of Protestantism cannot, which is not only her cruelty and severity, but her exorbitancy, and whether she hath or can have any argument to the said Prince; therefore for his countenancing of her greater than this (*viz.* than as she knoweth that all the evil which would otherwise be charged upon her wholly, and only as a Church, may now through his countenancing of her, be in part as well charged upon his Royal Authority and pleasure, as upon her; which argument being really of no better a nature than this, whether it be therefore reasonable in it self, or whether it be so much as fit or modest for the said Church to make, or whether it be agreeable to that duty, honour and sincerity, which she as a Church professeth, and ought at all times uprightly to pay to her Prince, I leave to consideration; and especially, when with reference to the effect of this motion, it is matter of fact, that 26 private persons are only gratified (many of which are men of no Birth, Interest, or Temporal Estate in the Nation) and more than twice so many thousands are greatly grieved, injured, and wronged in their persons and estates, which are equally his Majesties Subjects as well as they, and some of which, at least, are every way Peers to them for Birth, for Vertue, for Temperance, for Morality, for Mercy, for Charity, and Temporal Estate, and even for Loyalty it self.

Besides either, guilt is a thing of weight before God, or it is not, and the guilt which not only our first Reformers, but which our Church doth at this day charge upon the Church of *Rome*, by reason of her persecution, is justly charged upon her, or it is not; if the guilt be real, and that it be justly charged upon the said Church, it is apparently criminal two ways; *viz.* both as the through her persecution is the cause of all that Hypocrisie, Dissimulation, and Apostasy which men commit for meer fear of her, and by which, though out of weakness they do greatly wrong their own Consciences, and greatly injure their former Profession before God, and know they do so, and lie oftentimes under trouble all their lives afterwards for it; and as she is equally the cause of all those solemn complaints, cries, and appeals unto God, and who are conscious to themselves of their sincerity and integrity towards God, and who

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are destitute of all other help or remedy in the Earth, do in their grief and streights oft-times make and pour out unto God, as the Righteous Judge of all persons; and which righteous Prayers, Complaints, and Appeals to God, we not only as Christians, but as Protestants, when we write against the Church of *Rome*, do expressly affirm shall be heard: and that the shall answer as well for the crimes, as the oppressions and wrongs that the hath unjustly brought upon us.

Wherefore when the Protestant Church (or the Clergy who are the Rulers of it) shall be guilty of the same manner of persecution, and upon the very same grounds or principles that the Popish Clergy are, even because men in their worship or service of God do desire to obey the Law, Mind, and Will of God, so far as it appears clear to them from his word, and because they believe that his word alone is his rule to his Church, and for no other cause whatever, relating to any blemish, or evil which can be charged upon them in their lives or Conversations; and when by the means of this persecution, the said Protestant Church (or the ruling Clergy of it) are the occasion of some mens hypocrisie, dissimulation, and desertion of their principles (through weakness) to the extreme injury and wrong of their own Consciences, and are not only the occasion, but the main and express cause of the sighs, sufferings, groans, and complaints of divers others that are poured out in the very bitterness of their souls unto God, and when the said Protestant Church (or the said ruling Clergy) shall nevertheless have no sense at all of these things, nor seem to be in the least moved, or concern'd for them.

And these things, if they be considered, I humbly offer it, whether any man as rational can draw any other conclusion from them, but that the said Protestant Church, &c. do not believe themselves at all when they write against the Papist for these things, and notwithstanding they do seem in their Books to threaten the Church of *Rome* with the dreadful Judgments of God, because of their cruelty, and of their persecution of men for Conscience sake, yet they do indeed but laugh in their Sleeves at it, and do intend to frighten them only with Scare-crows, Bug-bears, and Pot-guns, seeing they credit none of these things themselves, as likely to befall any such actions, or such as are the Authors of it; for would it not be a great uncharitableness for any man to imagine, or rather would it not be a thing very absurd to apprehend, that the Protestant Clergy should do the very same things which the Church of *Rome* doth, if they did really believe themselves in what they usually write against the Church of *Rome*, when they threaten them with the Judgments of God upon them for the said things.

If to avoid this then, which they may look upon perhaps as some imputation or reflection upon the said Protestant Church (or the ruling Clergy of it) shall deny the case to be the same, and shall say, that the grounds or principles upon which they persecute men, are much different from those of the Papist, or Church of *Rome*, let themselves lay down the state of it, and shew us wherein the greatness of the said difference doth consist; and wherein it is plainly such, and so great, as that though we are to believe, and ought to believe that the Judgments of God will unquestionably reach the Church of *Rome* for this their cruelty and persecution, and for the unrighteousness of it, yet we are not to believe, or so much as to imagine they will ever befall the Protestant Church (or the ruling Clergy of it) notwithstanding any persecution that they are guilty of.

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For if the fact for which men are punished by the said Protestant Clergy be the very same (or of the same nature) with that for which the Popish Clergy do punish men (*viz.*) for their worshipping of God, and for their worshipping of him not contrary to the Scripture, or contrary to any thing that seems clearly and plainly the'r duty in the word of God, but contrary only to some Order or other in the Church; and if the quality of the persons that do suffer, and that are punished by the Protestant Clergy, are the same also with the quality of those that are punished by the Popish Clergy, *viz.* such men as are neither blameable in, nor so much as accused or charged by them with or for any crime, or any immorality in their lives or conversations, but such as otherwise demean themselves in all duty, and with all subjection to their Superiours.

I say, if both these are the very same one with another, where can, or doth the Essential Difference lie between the persecution of the Popish Clergy, and the persecution of the Protestant Clergy, or between the nature of the one, and the nature of the other, unless it be strictly in this, *viz.* that the Protestant Clergy do pretend to believe the Scriptures to be the Supreme Rule and Mind of God to his Church, and if ask'd, do freely grant, that men are not bound in Conscience to any Rule superior to this, nor can be in the things of Faith, or in things relating to the worship of God; and yet with the same breath that they say this, and at the very same time that they own it, they persecute their Brethren, not only in their Liberties, but in the'r Goods, Fortunes, and Estates, and sometimes in their Lives also (through nasty Prison, and want of conveniences) for acknowledging the said Scriptures to be such as they themselves own to be, and for that they conform themselves to it accordingly, not in word or pretence, but in deed and truth; whereas the Popish Clergy, though they persecute men for the same Crime, yet they do not give so much honour to the Scriptures, nor do so much as pretend to it; but which of these two are for this very cause the greater Crimes before God, I must leave to rational men to consider.

In the mean time, I am most sure of this, *viz.* that whether our first Reformers did well, or not well, in calling the Church of *Rome* Antichrist, and in charging her with Innocent Blood, and in putting the name of the Scarlet Whore (for this reason) upon her, and whether the guilt of that Blood will ever be wiped off from her, or not, in the sight of God; yet notwithstanding 'tis most certain, that the peculiar stain and discredit of it is now manifestly lessened, if it be not wholly blotted out; for it is impossible, that the Church of *Rome* should ever hereafter grant these things to be stains or crimes proper only to her, which she doth not only see, but can daily observe the Protestant Church to follow her in, and to follow her in upon such grounds as are far less justifiable in the said Protestant Church (according to the Principles they profess) than they are in her self; and that this is not a thing ever to be hoped or expected from her hereafter, is the more clear, in regard the said Church of *Rome* hath already in so many words sharply and closely retorted it upon our very Church, that in the very thing which we blame the said Church of *Rome* for, and accuse her criminally of, and pretend to be one main ground why we could no longer have any communion with her (which was her setting aside the sole authority of the Scripture, and persecuted such as desired to walk according to the rule of it) we our selves have not only imitated

initiated her, but have out-gone her, and done so much worse than she ever did, by how much we have contradicted the Principles we profess, which she hath not; and that she hath not only cast this reproach upon us in words, but alledged several arguments to confirm, and such as have not to this very day been answered by us, is matter of Fact.

And therefore if in all Courts of Judicature matter of Fact be good Evidence, and if the highest Evidence that can be given in matter of Fact is when the Fact is able to speak and attest it self, or when it is capable to be attested to by thousands, then is the Evidence which I here bring every way as good, and every way as valid to prove what I affirm, which for the greater notice I again here repeat: *Viz.*

That the Church of *Rome* hath exprelly justified her self from the Crime of unjust persecution and blood, by instancing our practise of the same thing one toward another as Protestants, or as a Reformed Church.

And therefore that she hath by this instance justly exonerated her self from the sole guilt of this evil, and consequently from the sole guilt of her being that *Babylon* mentioned *Rev. 17.* which we have formerly fixed singly upon her, and attributed to none beside her.

And that beside the discharging her self from the sole and only guilt of this Crime, she hath produced several arguments also (and those of weight) to make it appear, that we in our persecution one of another as Protestants and Reformed Churches, are far more unjust upon the Principles we profess, than she is upon her own Principles, how much soever we have pleaded to the contrary against her, and revile her.

That these arguments she hath no way scrupled publicly and openly to divulge in English, to the end that every man that is rational may the better examine them, consider them, and judge of them.

And that we have not pleaded as yet to the said arguments (or to the Restoration she hath thus made upon us) either by denying the fact it self absolutely, or by distinguishing the respective circumstances and grounds of it, which may give her the more just occasion to think we are conscious to ourselves of our own guilt.

And seeing all this is pure matter of fact, one of these 2 conclusions therefore do seem to me to be utterly impossible to be avoided, *viz.* either that we have done very evil in charging the Church of *Rome* as Antichristian, and very evil in separating from her, as guilty of that blood of the Saints which is mentioned *Rev. 17. 6.* (and which must nevertheless inevitably be charged somewhere) and very evil to impose the name of the Scarlet Whore, and of *Babylon* upon her.

Or if we as a Protestant and as a Reformed Church have said all this right in judgment, and really in truth against her, then have we done much worse to our selves in being actually guilty of the same things which we have so criminally charged upon her, and condemned her for, and in our giving her this means, not only an occasion to justify her self against us, but to upbraid us for doing herein much more irregularly, and much more inexcusably than her self: So that it still remains, that the Church of *Rome* is guilty of Innocent Blood, or not; if guilty of Innocent Blood, none that is sober then can doubt, but she must be liable to the extreme Judgments of God at length for it; and therefore it remains likewise, that we our selves (as a Protestant Church